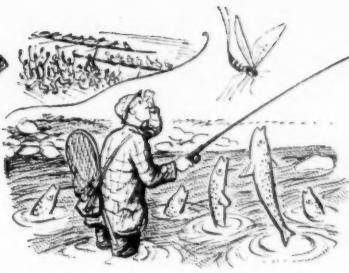




PUNCHY

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CXCVI, No. 5,121

May 31 1939

Charivaria

A LONDON merchant has opened a shop for the sale of Manx cats. He thinks there is considerable scope for a retailer in this line of business.

According to a music-hall star, it is hard for comedians to keep brand-new gags a secret. Nevertheless they continue to do so.

"MARS. A deeper understanding is necessary in your personal relationships. Try to clear the atmosphere. You need more rest." *Fortune Forecast, "Daily Mail."*

Mars, please note.

"Please run your car into us and let us look over it for you." *Advt. Letter.*

You might look under it too while you're down there.



A French artist paints pictures on convex pieces of glass. The idea is to hang them back to front on lighthouse walls.

A retired Army officer says he is seriously thinking of forming a club in the City for henpecked husbands only. The only qualification for membership will of course be lack of enough courage to join.

An eminent chef thinks that people nowadays have too little individuality to care for really well-cooked food. Modern life, it seems, has poached their ego.

A scientist declares that too much smoking is liable to make a woman age very quickly. Girls in their early nicotine should remember this.



"The speaker will be none other than Sir Waldron Smithers. Being, like Mr. Vernon Bartlett, a Member of Parliament, Sir Waldron can claim to give as authoritative a statement on European and home affairs as Mr. Bartlett gave. In addition, Sir Waldron can offset the fact that he is not an experienced foreign correspondent with the fact that he is a Knight."—*Beckenham & Penge Advertiser.*

Laugh that off, *Mister Bartlett.*

"On Saturday, May 20th, we shall have the pleasure of seeing the marriage of Miss Betty — in Alfold Church. The bridegroom is in the Sudan at present, but will be home for the wedding." *Parish Magazine.*

It wouldn't be the same without him, would it?

"American detectives have some hair-raising adventures that are kept from the public," says an American police officer. Can that be the reason they never take their hats off?



A lost dog that strayed on to a golf-course near London and barked joyously when a member holed in one has been adopted by the club and named "Tact." The secretary exercises it.





"Anything special on the Crisis page, Ellis?"

Hats Upon the Waters

A SHIPPING office on a Monday afternoon does not normally present a scene of rush and bustle. Rather does it soothe the eye of the observer with a dignified repose, a mellow restfulness, a great sense of peace. But in the office of Messrs. Bunker and Trim, where the first scene of this harrowing drama of the docks is laid, the traditional calm is shattered. Urgently and insistently ring the telephones, hither and yon rush the office-boys, and loud and clear rings the voice of Mr. Jobson, head of the Brokerage Department, as he urges on them the need of still greater celerity. The liner *Charybdis*, due into East Dock at six in the evening to take two thousand tons of bunkers, must catch the night tide if she is to enter the dock before Tuesday, and she is two hours late at Flamborough Head. Now Mr. Jobson, bowler-hatted, is telephoning the dock-master to keep the dock-

gates open till the last possible instant; anon his henchman, Mr. Roger Paisley, likewise wearing the badge of his profession, is demanding of the pilot station at Tynemouth: (a) whether they can see the *Charybdis* yet, (b) whether they are really looking out for her, (c) whether they would recognise her supposing she were to be shoved under their noses. Just then in dashes an office-boy with a wireless message from the ship—“Due East Dock Nine P.M.” In the ensuing conversation between Mr. Jobson and the dock-master, Mr. Jobson’s cigarette goes out and his bowler-hat is tilted so far back on his head that any hat that had not been accustomed from infancy to cling to the back of a shipbroker’s head must have given up the struggle; but the dock-master is adamant. Two hours after high tide, say the regulations, the gates close; six-forty-three, says the Astronomer Royal, is high

tide at East Dock; and at eight-forty-three to the consanguineous second (says the dock-master) the dock-gates will be closed by his own fair hands.

Back to the ship goes the curt message: “*Make all possible haste*”; and down in the Brokerage Department Mr. Jobson and his assistant go into a huddle.

As the shades of night were falling three contrasting figures in bowler-hats might have been seen walking along the dock-wall towards the river entrance. The dock-master, short and stout, walked between the tall athletic figure of Mr. Paisley and the small wiry one of Mr. Jobson. The dock-master, worthy man, wore an expression of sullen resolution, as of a man determined not to be talked out of an unpleasant duty. Mr. Jobson was his usual perky confident self; but Mr. Paisley, though conversing freely and affably, seemed to gaze

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around him with a somewhat feverish eye. More especially was this haunted look in evidence when his gaze happened to turn towards the oily waters of the dock.

The three bowler-hats gathered in conclave close to the dock-gates. In the gathering gloom the dock-master could be seen to produce his watch and hold it up for inspection by the others. From a mile down the river came the *Bwaap-bwaap-bwaap* of a big ship's siren.

Finally the rotund figure of the dock-master moved over towards the switch that closed the gates. Mr. Jobson tipped his bowler over one eye and began to light a cigarette. But before it was halfway to his lips there was a stumble, a loud cry, and an even louder *Splash!* and the gallant Paisley disappeared beneath the inky waters of the dock.

The ensuing confusion, considering that there were only two people participating, was in the highest degree creditable to Mr. Jobson's histrionic powers. That gentleman, apparently losing his head completely, rushed to and fro in a frantic manner, wringing his hands and exclaiming: "Help! help! He'll be drowned! He can't swim! Help! help!" The dock-master gave one look at the water and with great presence of mind set off at a vigorous trot towards terra firma, declaring loudly that he was going for a rope. Simultaneously a bubbling noise from just within the dock-gates proclaimed the presence of the dauntless Paisley, who had been swimming about under water for the last half-minute.

"Has he gone?" gasped Mr. Paisley. "Shut up, you idiot!" replied Mr. Jobson sternly. "Here comes the *Charybdis*."

And indeed the lights of the big liner and her tugs were clearly visible coming round the bend half a mile away.

"Can I come out now?" said Mr. Paisley. "It's pretty cold in here."

"No," replied his heartless senior, "he might suspect something. He thinks you can't swim."

Mr. Paisley was pointing out with some feeling that at this rate the only way of lulling the dock-master's suspicions was by allowing his, Mr. Paisley's, bloated corpse to be discovered floating in the dock some three days later, when the sound of hurrying footsteps brought a sharp admonition from Mr. Jobson. It was the dock-master, returning *ventre à terre* with the promised rope.

It was a critical moment, for the *Charybdis* was still a good quarter of

a mile away. As the dock-master thundered through the night towards him, Mr. Jobson, reasoning at lightning speed, decided that he could not risk a failure of their plans by trying to distract the dock-master's attention with a mere display of agitation. It was, he perceived, a time for deeds rather than words; only his own personal intervention could save the situation. Without a sound he laid himself prostrate at full length across the narrow dock-wall, and waited.

There was a dull thud as the dock-master, now travelling at a hand-gallop, struck the obstacle with his foot; then a moment of pregnant silence before the waters of the Tyne were cleft asunder by the impact of a

heavy, respected, middle-aged employee of the Dock Commissioners.

As the dock-master, looking like a rather seedy Neptune, was hauled to safety by the united efforts of Messrs. Jobson and Paisley, the *Charybdis* slid placidly into the dock; and two bowler-hats, which for the past minute had been in imminent danger of being crushed between the dock-wall and the ship's side, bobbed out on the heaving waters and side by side set forth on the long trail.

The Pessimists

"THE OPTIMIST was discontinued after the first issue, published on May 3."
Newspaper World.



"Let's have a round to-morrow morning about nine."

"Is it light at nine?"

"I Was in Goatia."

II

HAVE I been unfair to little Goatia? There are some who think I have.

Witness this letter which came to me yesterday.

*The Compound,
Bath.*

SIR.—As one who has spent not one but several idyllic holidays as an honoured guest of the Slunks, I protest emphatically at the strain of ridicule which I seem to detect in your references to the behaviour of this bold and manly race, and the rocky and beautiful terrain of the Stickomuthian hills.

The Slunk knows a *sahib* when he sees him. It is more than probable that he despises and resents accordingly the overtures of a buffoon. It has been said of him in battle that the old infantry formula: "Don't shoot till you see the whites of their eyes," is inapplicable to the Slunk for the simple reason that the eyes of the Slunk are always red. As an old *shikari*, Goatia and the foot-hills of the Gorblimian *massif* have for years been one of my favourite stamping grounds. There is no country which provides such ample sporting facilities for those in search of widgeon, mallard, snipe, teal, knot, woodcock, and sometimes smew. You speak of the meagre fare provided for casual visitors. Have you ever, I wonder, been present at a great *stodj* or *bynj* in Goatia, when a succulent roast lynx or an otter has formed the *pièce de résistance*, cooked as only the Slunk can cook it, with a sauce of wild garlic and juniper-berries, and garnished by the delicate fungi which abound, as they abound nowhere else, amongst the marshes of the Pold? The wine on these occasions would be a seven- or eight-years'-old *muick*, snow-cooled, and delightfully sweetened with the honey of mountain hornets newly taken from their rocky nests.

But I am far more concerned by your suggestion, covert though it may be, and doubtless intentionally is, of definite political hostility towards Goatia.. I should have thought that at a time like this, when Mr. Chamberlain is pursuing his great policy of appeasement and it is touch-and-go as to whether any or all of the nations of Eastern Europe cannot be welded together in one solid wall of anti-aggression against the claims (just though many of them may be, and on that I pass no comment) of Herr Hitler's Reich, it ill behoves a once-esteemed English paper to pillory as semi-barbarous a country which, with proper financial assistance, we may soon be hailing as one of our own plucky little allies. *Punch*, we all know, has never been what it was, and never will be, but there is a want of dignity about this attack which far surpasses all its previous errors of bad taste.

I see also that you make no allusion to the ancient capital of Goatia, still marked by the site of the ruins of the former castle of Spatz, where, in 1117 and again in 1120, the Slunks received their charter of freedom from William the Bald of Constantinople. *Verbi sap.*

I remain, Sir,

Yours disgustedly,

J. RUCKPEN, Lieut.-Col.
(*Wilson's Horse Retired*).

There is, I admit, one grain of truth in what my correspondent says. I should have mentioned, it was wrong of me to forget, the garlic of Goatia; the memory of it stays with

me still, the fragrance of it haunts my dreams. It is the favourite flower of the Slunks. It is the seasoning of all their banquets and the most prolific of all their native plants. It is a cure for all maladies whether of body or soul. It is well known in Goatia that garlic is the only safe charm against wer-wolves, and as nearly all Slunks become wer-wolves when they die, the use of the herb is almost obligatory, nor will an ordinary wolf, nor even the brown Poldanian bear, readily attack a wounded Slunk, impregnated as he is with the perfume that guards him from every ill.



THE MAYOR OF WRYZCW

I should not be surprised, indeed, to learn that my gallant correspondent was himself rendered immune from attacks by the fierce fauna of the mountainside owing to his partiality for roasts and ragouts flavoured in this delightful Goatian manner. Nay, Colonel Ruckpen, I feel sure that you were! But when you attack me for under-valuing the services of Goatia as a possible ally in war-time you do me an injustice that I bitterly resent. I am the last man to take it lightly if the news should reach me that a great military motor road is to be driven through the Stickomuthian hills by the engineers of an unfriendly Power. But I trust rather to the native *intransigence* of the Slunk to prevent this attack on his independence than to his genius for ordinary political intrigue.

A neutral self-governing Goatia is, in fact, the Goatia of my dreams.

THE Slunk, I say again, is not the man to accept a bribe and, having accepted it, to comply with the will of the tempter. He is not the man who because he is given a dozen bags of gold will barter his birthright of freedom, so long as he has a rifle and a convenient tuft of garlic behind which he can lie and shoot at the corrupter of his integrity. I would fain see him allied neither to the forces of aggression nor to the forces of peace. He is above and outside them both. He does not understand the ways of democratic commerce nor those of Aryan *weltpolitik*. If he did, I often think I should be able to get the contents of my rucksack and my little camera back again. EVOE.

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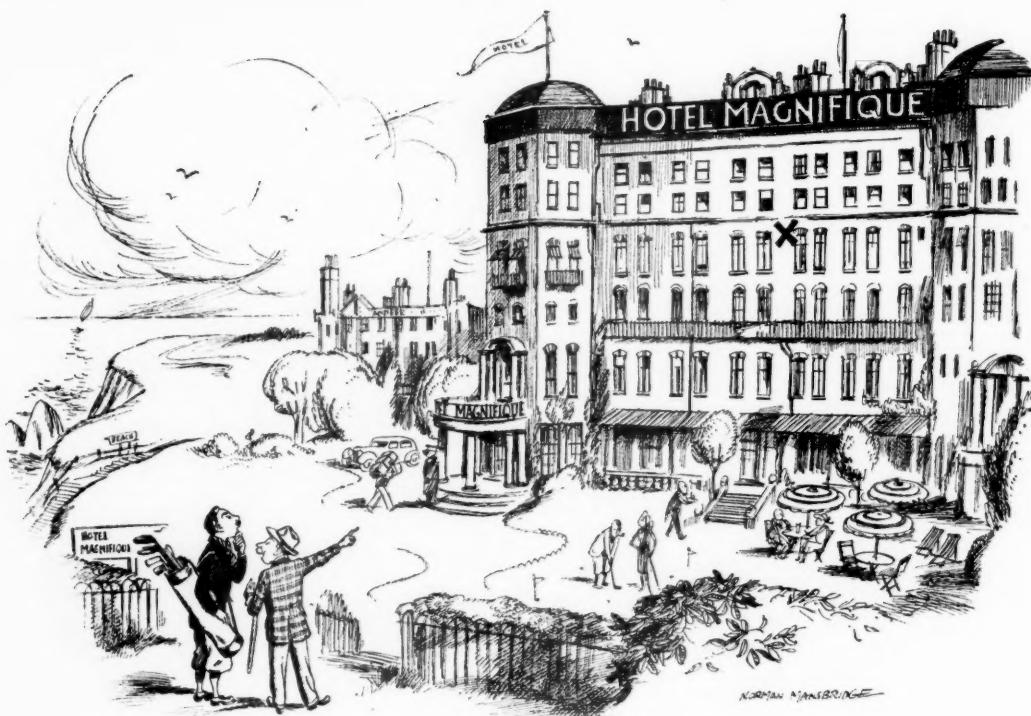
"ARMS USELESS ON A WET DAY"

Advertiser's announcement in the "Evening Standard."

Does Mr. HORE-BELISHA know?



UP THE GARDEN PATH



"That's my bedroom."

The Pier

THIS is the Pier.
The Band of His Majesty's Warmstream Guards
plays here
Thrice daily (weather permitting).
Doze, read or do your knitting
To the strains you know so well—
The Overture to "William Tell,"
"The Gondoliers,"
"O Dry Those Tears,"
"In a Chinese Temple Garden"
And that "1812" affair. Beg pardon?
No, that's not "The Lost Chord," not by a long
chalk;
That's "My Baby Don't Care For Pork."

This is the Pier.
We should hate to boast
But this Pier has the finest Joy Palace
("Yes, indeed, Alice!")
On the South or any other coast.
You can have a riotous time.
You can hear Westminster Bells chime;
Attend an execution; play Peeping Tom
In a Sultan's harem; help to bomb
A building; watch a house on fire
And see a lady rescued in her night-attire;

Have your horoscope read; drive a train,
Steer a motor-car or pilot an aeroplane.
You can test your skill
At hockey, football, cricket—what you will.
There's no end of fun to be got
From placing pennies in a slot.

This is the Pier.
Here is the Chinese Pagoda;
Here is a cool and bubbling fountain (soda);
Here in deck-chairs lie, sit or loll
The worshippers of King Sol—
Row upon row of damp shiny faces
Stamped with jolly holiday grimaces.
(If you want to be boiled and boint
This indubitably is the joint.)
Here also is that gay ground,
The fisherman's playground,
Where oft the fish is father to the thought
And nothing's lost that has not yet been caught.
The place bristles with rods; but where, oh, where
Are the fishermen? Hist! on a rod over there
A bell tinkles; a monster is on the line!—
It's probably only a dab
Making a passing grab—
Out rush a score of anglers shouting "Mine!"

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Whence do these sturdy sea-clad sportsmen come?
Don't be so dumb—
This is the Pier
Where you can get Good Beer.

Come in your thousands (certainly the Pier is safe)
And visit the gorgeous Louis Katorze Kafe
And the new Sun Lounge overlooking the sea.
(The more we are together the hotter we'll be.)
Rally your partners for the "Chestnut Tree"
And the "Lambeth Walk"—come along and dance
In the Baroque Ballroom facing the shores of France!
Roll up in your hearty hordes—the fun is prime—
And have a perspiring good time!

"Do steamers call here?"
"Only sometimes, Madam—this is the Pier."

○ ○

So Much a Second

IT was the third day of a case in the High Court of Justice, King's Bench Division, in which I was the plaintiff. A multitude of counsel was engaged in the case, the total costs of which were estimated to amount to at least £1,000 a day. And on this, the third day, counsel was still opening my case.

Utterly bored, I started to while away the time by making certain abstruse mathematical calculations.

£1,000 a day meant approximately £200 an hour, £3 6s. 8d. a minute, 1s. 1½d. a second.

So that if counsel said to the Judge—as he invariably did—"My lord, if I might direct your lordship's attention to page 93 of the correspondence, my lord" (which takes five seconds to say), instead of merely, "On page 93 of the correspondence" (which takes two seconds), the net cost to the parties was 3s. 3½d. Similarly I found that we should have to pay for the oft-recurring phrases, "In my submission, my lord" and "With great respect, my lord," at the rate of 1s. 7½d. and 1s. 4½d. respectively.

I also calculated that the cost of each of the Judge's jokes (which in no way advanced the case) was—allowing for laughter, repartees by counsel and more laughter—anything from £1 to 30s. And it is worthy of note that on one occasion the Judge took umbrage at laughter at the back of the court by persons mistakenly under the impression that some judicial remark was intended to be humorous, whereupon he threatened to have the court cleared if the public could not behave themselves. The learned Judge impressed upon them the fact that this was not an entertainment but a very serious case—at a cost of £2 7s. 6d.

I found that I was becoming obsessed by this question of expense, impotent as I was to prevent my money being frittered away, and everything translated itself in my mind into terms of pounds, shillings and pence. This process continued even when the evidence was called, and I can vividly remember the irritation I felt at the behaviour of one of my witnesses. When the Associate of the Court said to him, "Take the Book in your right hand and repeat after me," the witness proceeded to take it in his *left* hand, and the cost of pointing out and rectifying this error came to 5s. 6½d. And then, as if the wretched fellow had not cost us enough, he added at the end of the oath the quite superfluous words, "So help me God," and proceeded

to kiss the Bible with a resounding smack. Another 2s. 2d. on the bill!

But all these items were of minor account compared with the cost of a discussion which took place at the end of the day between the learned Judge and learned counsel concerning "a difficulty" learned counsel would be in the following day, inasmuch as one of them had to be in the Court of Appeal and another in the House of Lords, "and it would be a great convenience, my lord, to my learned friend and myself if your lordship could adjourn the case to a day next week, my lord, convenient to your lordship, if your lordship pleases"; and his lordship, after much consultation with the Associate, informed counsel that he was sitting in the Court of Criminal Appeal on the following Monday and would be sitting in Chambers on the Tuesday, but that he would adjourn the case till the Wednesday, if that would be convenient to counsel; and learned counsel, after agitated whispering with their clerks, interspersed with apologies to the learned Judge for keeping him waiting and reassurances from the learned Judge to the effect that his time was their time, ultimately decided that it *would* be convenient to them (whether it would be convenient to the parties that their case should be left "in the air" for a week did not seem to merit consideration); and the learned Judge rose and bowed to learned counsel, and learned counsel bowed to the learned Judge, and the court adjourned on a note of great amity and well-being, this little interlude accounting for the modest sum of £16 13s. 4d.

But it so happened that the £16 13s. 4d. was well spent. In the time that elapsed before the adjourned hearing the case was settled, the parties having come to terms—and to their senses.

The following Wednesday the matter was "mentioned" to the Judge, who was informed of the settlement. I wouldn't like to say what it cost to tell the Judge the glad tidings.



"I want a dress-suit. Something ready-made."

At the Pictures

GANGSTERS IN CORNWALL

I HAVEN'T read *Jamaica Inn*—I never do seem to have read these things: on this page before very long, I suppose, if I can hold out, I shall be admitting that I never read *Gone With the Wind*—but I gather that there have been alterations for the film version (Director: ALFRED HITCHCOCK). However, there haven't been enough alterations to make the result anything like what is usually understood by "a HITCHCOCK film." This is pre-eminently a LAUGHTON film: Mr. LAUGHTON with a miniature Roman-nose, as the villainous *Sir Humphrey Pengallan*, doesn't so much run away with the show as allow it to swirl round him. There is little of the usual HITCHCOCK suspense in this story of Cornish wreckers in the early nineteenth century; and some of the props and the backgrounds look stagey and artificial. I certainly never expected any work of Mr. HITCHCOCK's to be open to that criticism.

The story too—at any rate as it is here (no doubt the plot of the novel has been much simplified)—is without distinction, to put it mildly. It's just a G-man tale in fancy-dress, except that in those days they hadn't thought of the abbreviation and said "Government man" in full. Almost everything in the modern gangster story can be found here. The G-man in disguise joins the gang to get evidence; the identity of the mastermind behind it is known only to its leader; the hero at the head of—shall we say the Marines?—arrives in time to save the heroine who has been kidnapped by the big shot; and the master-mind himself, the big exhibitionist, makes a spectacular end by leaping from the nearest handy equivalent of a skyscraper—the top of a ship's mast.

Well, let's consider the picture almost exclusively as a frame for the LAUGHTON virtuosity; as such it's all right. It has other points of interest: it introduces MAUREEN O'HARA as the heroine, and she seems to be a find; it gives other players, notably EMLYN WILLIAMS, MARIE NEY and LESLIE BANKS, opportunities for excellent work on a smaller scale. But it's Mr. LAUGHTON's picture. I won't go so far as to say that one can understand all he says, for in places he over-exaggerates *Sir Humphrey's* accent, but he gives a highly entertaining performance.

Midnight (Director: MITCHELL LEISEN) is one of those glittering and expensive productions that are apt to make me feel guilty while I enjoy them. It surely can't be right (I reflect) to get pleasure from a story so trivial, so completely lacking in artistic or social conscience, so full of stock situations.



A RIFT IN THE LOOT

Joss Merlyn *Leslie Banks*
Sir Humphrey Pengallan . . . *Charles Laughton*

so empty of significance. The fact that in this instance I did is traceable to the work of CLAUDETTE COLBERT, JOHN BARRYMORE, DON AMECHE, FRANCIS LEDERER and others; mostly, no doubt, Miss COLBERT. She plays



PENNILESS IN PARIS
(Straight from Monte Carlo)

Tibor Czerny *Don Ameche*
Eve Peabody *Claudette Colbert*

the part of *Eve Peabody*, chorus-girl, stranded in Paris with nothing but an evening-dress and enough money for a newspaper to keep the rain off her head. She meets a taxi-driver, *Tibor Czerny* (DON AMECHE), and, when she crashes an expensive party, is inspired to give his name, which leads her to be taken for a baroness. He saves her on the edge of discovery by himself posing as the baron, her husband.

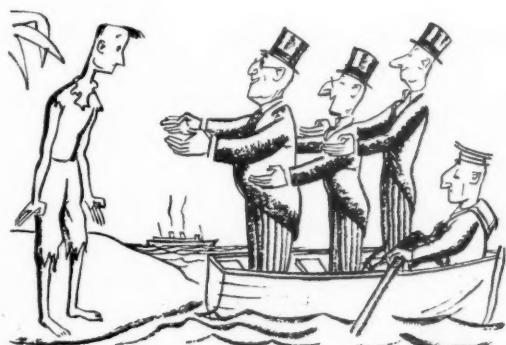
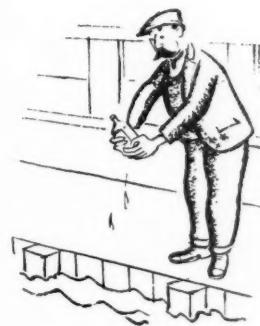
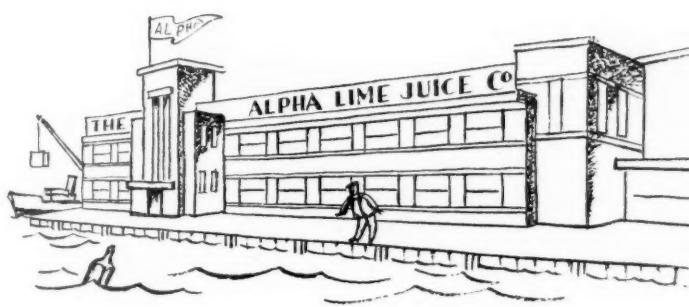
Among the other complications is JOHN BARRYMORE as a rich man who guesses the truth but retains her, as it were, to divert from his wife (MARY ASTOR) the attentions of a professional philanderer (FRANCIS LEDERER). There are parties, much dancing and drinking in opulent surroundings, lots of bright lights, and a good deal of funny dialogue. Escapists, please note.

By the time you read this the town will be full of Big Attractions designed for the Whitsun holiday trade; actually, I imagine, no bigger than those to be seen at the moment, but deceptively magnified by the arts of publicity. Most films mentioned here will seem pretty old-world to London readers; but I am inclined to put on record *Huckleberry Finn* and *Let Freedom Ring*.

Huckleberry Finn (Director: RICHARD THORPE) provides an ideal part for MICKEY ROONEY, although it wastes WALTER CONNOLLY and WILLIAM FRAWLEY as "The King" and "The Duke." It sticks fairly closely to the book (this happens, at last, to be one I have read), except that *Tom Sawyer* isn't there at all, if you can imagine that. REX INGRAM, the noble-looking negro who was "De Lawd" in *Green Pastures*, is admirable as the slave *Jim*, and in one or two places the picture does seem to get the feel of MARK TWAIN's Mississippi. In the nature of things though it can only be a sketch.

Let Freedom Ring (Director: JACK CONWAY) is American patriotic stuff, but quite enjoyable. The period is the eighteen-sixties, and NELSON EDDY is there singing traditional songs right and left and inspiring the European labourers (imported to work on the new railroad) with the realisation that they are Americans and that in the land of the free no one need vote the way a villainous boss tells him to. EDWARD ARNOLD is the villainous boss, VIRGINIA BRUCE is the girl, VICTOR McLAGLEN is a good-hearted tough, CHARLES BUTTERWORTH is funny-man pianist, and there's plenty of riding, fighting, shooting, chasing and singing.

R. M.



The Monkey and the Bishop

"I HAVE received," said my poor friend Poker, M.P., "an interesting letter from a Cambridge College which stirs to the depths the ancient problem, 'What is funny and why?' Others, of course, approach that problem in longer words and speak of the Foundation of Humour, the Psychology of Laughter, and so on: and I give my Cambridge correspondent many marks for not doing so. He says:—

'In the House of Commons on Budget Day you made a speech, which I read . . . There is, however, one point in it that puzzles

me, and that is the remark with which you ended, "As the monkey said to the bishop, I can't say fairer than that." (Loud laughter)

'Why the loud laughter? The remark by itself, while it certainly records something unusual, is not funny. Surely the Members do not find it amusing that a monkey should speak to a bishop?

'We discussed the significance of your remark over dinner the other evening, but could not arrive at any definite conclusion.'

"I like," said Poker, "to think of that jolly gathering of Cambridge dons

discussing the essence of fun. But I am sorry to perceive how little they know of the elements of the subject.

"'The remark,' says my friend, 'by itself is not funny.' But, surely, very few remarks are. Mr. Augustine Birrell said, 'They represent nobody but themselves, and they have the full confidence of their constituents' (or something like it). That remark is not 'funny by itself,' but it becomes funny when you know that he was speaking of the House of Peers. 'It is good in parts' is not 'funny by itself' and does not rouse us to unruly shouts of merriment until we are told that the utterance refers to a curate's egg.

"Further, a remark may properly cause laughter in certain surroundings—a court of law, for example—which would be received with stony silence in a music-hall.

"In other words, before we can estimate the funnery-content (a new scientific expression of my own) of a given remark we must be informed what were the circumstances, the scene and the audience.

"This is the Relative Theory of Risibility.

"The remark in the law-court may cause facial disturbance and mental relaxation because of its unexpectedness, coming from the bewigged judge in his solemn surroundings. This is the Sub-Doctrine of Surprise.

"Closely related to that is the Marginal Theory of Incongruity. During an all-night sitting of the Commons a Member was passionately attacking His Majesty's Government. He was trying a new denture for the first time; it pained him and impeded his utterance: so, being a bold and unconventional man, he stopped suddenly and said, 'Excuse me, Mr. Speaker,' removed his teeth and put them away. He then continued, as seriously as before, to expose the deficiencies of the Government. The House laughed in a friendly way, because the episode was incongruous with the scene. 'Man,' as Hazlitt said, 'is the only animal who laughs and weeps: for he alone perceives the distinction between things as they are and things as they ought to be.' Outsiders who are tempted to turn up their noses in a superior manner at 'laughter in court' or Parliament should remember the Marginal Theory of Incongruity. They are not in a position to criticise, *simply because they were not there*.

"There is also of course the Theory of the Causation of the Ludicrous through the Apprehension of Misfortune. Or, in other words, the old gentleman who slips up on the banana-



The Small Beginning

skin. But we need not trouble ourselves with that to-day.

"Now," said my poor friend Poker, "I will tell you how the remark in question came to be made.

"As my Cambridge chum truly records, I was making a small speech on Budget Day. I had thanked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (who had been called away to a Cabinet meeting about Europe or some absurd place) for the small but courageous and very welcome relief he had promised to Music and the Drama by an abatement of the Entertainments Duty by a penny. Then I passed to another old favourite, the Betting Tax, and regretted that, as usual, there wasn't going to be one. Sir John was raising £24,000,000 by new taxation, and I said modestly that he could have raised £20,000,000 of that by a tax on betting, etc., given a proper reform of the laws, without touching the comforts or necessities of the people at all. I had spoken for twenty minutes only—seriously, even solemnly. I don't think the House was more bored than usual, but I had become rather bored with myself. Have you ever had that feeling on your feet? Have you ever thought, 'Well, the audience is kind enough; but what in the world is the good of my standing here talking this stuff? I've said it all fifty times before; nothing ever happens, and nothing ever will. Why am I not sitting quietly somewhere with some good chaps over a sherry?' 'Anyhow,' I thought, 'I'm becoming a bit heavy, and it's time I sat down.'

"Sit down. But how? I was less well 'prepared' than usual, and I had no earnest peroration or snappy conclusion ready. It is very important to have a good finish, and one reason why some of us go on so long is that we don't know how to stop. I couldn't think how to stop without repeating myself. I had already said that, in spite of the new relief, it was still true that Music and the Drama were taxed not merely on profits, but losses, while the unproductive practice of betting went free, and I didn't want to say it again. I saw the Chief Whip and the Financial Secretary to the Treasury gazing rather wearily at me and I thought, 'How right they are! All this is terribly heavy.' I had just said, 'If I am given a free hand by His Majesty's Government I will undertake to get that Bill through (a betting-law reform Bill) and make it a foundation upon which in a normal year they can get £20,000,000 of revenue . . .' And then I heard myself saying, without the smallest premeditation, 'And, as the monkey

said to the bishop, I can't say fairer than that.'

"I sat down. The Members laughed. And now my Cambridge chum asks me why they laughed. Well, I suppose we have here an illustration of the Marginal Theory of Incongruity, or perhaps the Sub-Doctrine of Surprise. The same instinct that moved me to make the remark moved the Members to laugh at it. For a private Member to offer to raise £20,000,000 a year by a new tax was a grandiloquent utterance with which what followed made a sharp and surprising contrast. The phrase 'I can't say fairer than that' is familiar to most people in much more modest surroundings (hence 'incongruity'), and was a sort of confession of boastfulness which, following the boast, created sympathy (see Block on 'The Contribution of Unconscious Sympathy to Human Merriment').

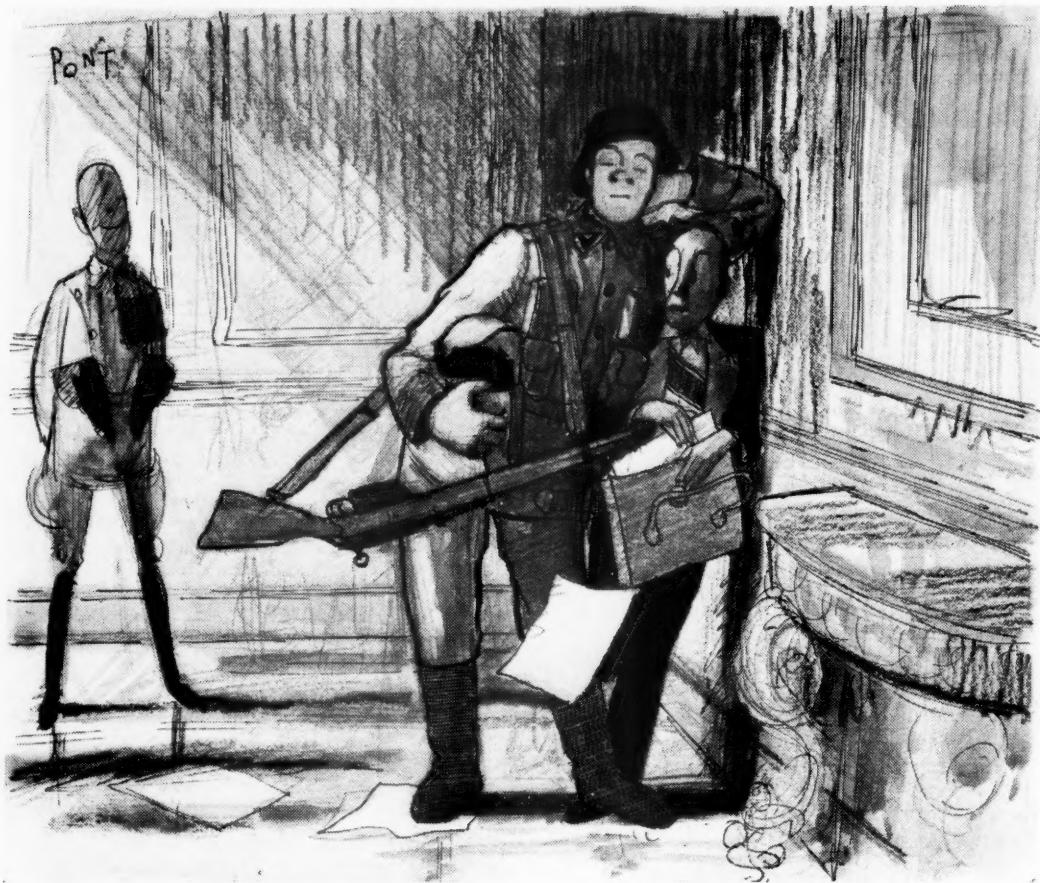
"And finally, I suppose, the monkey and the bishop played some, though not, I think, the major, part. Many citizens have eagerly inquired, 'In what circumstances did the monkey say to the bishop "I can't say fairer than that"?' The answer is 'I haven't

the faintest idea.' I have been strongly tempted to invent an appropriate setting for the tale, but honesty has prevailed. Indeed I can't remember in detail a single story about the monkey, but the phrase 'As the monkey said to the so-and-so . . .' has been familiar to me for generations, and by one of the queer antics of the mind the monkey happened to pop up in my extremity. The apparition of the bishop is much more easily explained, since I had previously mentioned the bishops when discussing the various forces (including the churches) alleged to be hostile to a reform of the betting laws.

"So there you are," said my poor friend Poker, "and I hope that Cambridge will be intellectually satisfied with my explanation. If not, I hope that they will console themselves with this reflection, that the remark, whether 'funny by itself' or not, did draw wide attention to my assertion that a betting tax, properly handled, would bring in £20,000,000 a year. And that, after all, is the object of remarks, especially in Parliament."

A. P. H.





POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS—DIPLOMACY

Libet Iacere

STUNNED by the headlines, Postumus, Postumus,
Here I repose, nor shall the daily papers,
Nor shall the New and Vital Revelations
Move me an atom.

Here where the grass is paler than the sunlight,
Leaf green and larch green mingle in the branches,
High leaps the squirrel, doubtful of his shadow,
I lie unheeding.

Bring me my garland, bring me my amphora,
Bring me a draught of long-desired nepenthe,
Though I observe from glancing at the label
It is colonial.

Cease to inform me how the Gaul and Teuton
Brandish their weapons, while upon the rostrum
Thunders the orator, damp with exaltation,
Phrases familiar.

Endlessly idle, Postumus, Postumus,
Spring airs and sunlight playing on my pillow,
Leave me at peace, observant of the cowslip,
Not of the crises.

○ ○

The Green-Keeper's Dream

"Si mes vers avaient des ailes.—If my worms had wings."
Schoolgirl's translation.

Pass the Salt, Please.

THE other day I asked a stranger in the restaurant-car of a railway train to pass the salt, and the next moment found that I was addressing Luise Rainer."

I only mention this curious affair in a railway-carriage (reported in the writings of a Sunday Paper columnist) because it reminds me of a somewhat similar incident in the 4.15 up local from Budleigh Salterton, when I asked a man in a tail-coat to open the window and immediately found myself gripped from behind by a shock-headed fellow with a motor-horn, who attempted to remove my braces. I am not used to this kind of thing, especially in Devonshire, and I called upon the man in the tail-coat to come to my assistance, but to my surprise saw that he was engaged in an attempt to auction the contents of the carriage to a friend in a rather Italian-looking hat. The ridiculous price at which some of the fittings were knocked down aroused my suspicions, and I said to the man in the tail-coat, "You are Groucho Marx, I believe." At this the three of them rushed out of the carriage and ran at great speed down the corridor.

I was congratulating myself on their departure when the noise of a motor-horn warned me that they were returning, and a moment later they reappeared, hustling a ticket-inspector between them.

"There he is," said Groucho. "That's the man."

"What did he do?" asked the inspector.

"He insulted me. He said I was like Groucho Marx."

"Did you say that?" said the inspector to me.

"Yes," I said.

"Well, what have you to say for yourself?"

"Nothing," I said. "He is Groucho Marx."

The inspector looked puzzled. "Are you Groucho Marx?" he asked.

"Yes," said Groucho.

An impasse was prevented only by the extraordinary behaviour of the man with the shock of hair.

"Look out, Inspector!" I shouted. "Harpo's got your ticket-punch!"

There was a bit of a scene, I'm afraid. We had to chase him all over the train, and before we cornered him he had punched holes in almost everything. The inspector said that somebody would have to pay for all this, but Groucho pointed out that you couldn't pay for holes—they weren't worth anything. Finally we all went into the guard's van, and Harpo played to us very nicely on his harp.

READING the columnist's account again I find that there was a difference between his experience and mine. He says of Luise Rainer that "Her forest-brown eyes are the eyes of a refugee seeking sanctuary." I noticed nothing of this kind about Groucho's eyes. The inspector's eyes were at times the eyes of a refugee, but then they were light-green—not forest-green either, but a sort of water-cress green. The only time I have ever seen forest-brown eyes in a railway-carriage was one day last summer, between Eastleigh and Basingstoke, when I asked a stranger not to take so much butter and it turned out to be Edward G. Robinson. I never saw a man take so much butter in the middle of the day. We had a bit of a talk. I said to him, "I thought you preferred guns to butter?"

He said, "Oh?"

I said, "I'm a tough baby myself, and I don't mean maybe."

He asked me to pass the mustard.

I said. "Say, listen, feller, I can smack the pip out of an ace of spades at forty paces."

He said he was glad to hear it.

After that I passed him the mustard, which he spread liberally on his fish in the American manner. But from first to last his eyes never had the look of a refugee seeking sanctuary. I'll swear to that in a court of law if necessary.

Since then I've been wondering. Supposing he'd asked me not to take so much butter, instead of the other way round, would I have turned out to be Myrna Loy?

I NEVER met Myrna Loy in a restaurant-car, or Deanna Durbin for that matter; but this week-end I'm going to take all my meals on trains, and I shall make a point of asking for a good deal of salt, mustard, vinegar, cheese, and so on. You never know. If anyone turns out to be Claudette Colbert I'm going to ask her to be my secretary and marry her boss. But it probably won't happen. I'm more likely to run across Charlie Chaplin or Harold Lloyd, and you know what Harold is like in a restaurant-car. I could have died with shame the last time I found myself next to him in a train (it was the 6.30 from Leeds, if I remember rightly). He kept striking matches on other people's hats—you know how awkward that kind of thing can become—and the moment the meal started he walked down the car flicking out all the men's ties so that the ends went in their soup. Nobody took any notice, as it was a First-Class carriage, but it seemed to me an unwarrantable thing to do. In America they'd have chased him from one end of the train to the other, and serve him right. The point is that I don't get any luck. If it's not Harold Lloyd that I'm next to, it will probably be Akim Tamiroff.

How would you like to eat cold turbot and custard next to Akim Tamiroff?

H. F. E.



"... twelve, thirteen—they'll be back to-morrow."



"Is she any good?"

"Oh, rather! She was to have played with a girl who was to have played at Wimbledon, but didn't."

Ballade of First Aid

MY lecturer is competent and clear,
My kindly class-mates do their helpful
best,
The learned book makes everything appear
Plain as a pikestaff on Mount Everest—
All to no purpose. I, alas! am blest
With hands resembling the proverbial ham;
Ask me to use them and my wits go west.
I shall not pass my A.R.P. Exam.

I am O.K. on paper; now and here
I'll name the bones of which man stands
possessed,
I know his occiput's behind his ear
And where the veins flow underneath his
vest,
I know how many ribs are in his chest

And where his spleen lurks and his diaphragm;
And yet the bitter truth is manifest—
I shall not pass my A.R.P. Exam.

My bandages would make a Bushman jeer,
My slings would be a South Sea Islands jest,
I cannot fix a splint that will adhere,
The kindest umpire could but stand distressed
Gazing on work so well and truly messed—
All knots and knobs in one unholy jam
And loose ends writhing like a serpent's nest . . .
I shall not pass my A.R.P. Exam.

Sir John! I cannot follow thy behest,
A butter-fingered nincompoop I am;
As sure as Brighton isn't Budapest,
I shall not pass my A.R.P. Exam.

H. B.



DESIGN FOR PEACE

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Impressions of Parliament

Friday, May 19th.—It was a Supply Day, and the Liberal Opposition, who had chosen the subject, put up a very sad and very ironical Mr. LLOYD GEORGE to treat of foreign affairs and particularly of Russia. Things had come to far too pretty a pass in his view for the bandying of party recriminations, but nevertheless he devoted a good part of his speech to slanging the Government for its "procrastination" and "political snobbery" towards Russia, without whose help our pledges to Poland and the Balkan countries were useless. For months we had been staring this powerful gift-horse in the mouth. ("And seen its false teeth!" interjected Wing-Commander JAMES.) The aggressors were getting ready again. Germany's aim was quick results. The Turkish agreement was admirable, but Russia, far stronger than was generally imagined, was vital to us. We should come to the same terms with Russia as we had with France. If we did, the odds, which were now at evens, would rise to ten to one against war.

Mr. ATTLEE declared that the U.S.S.R. was standing for collective security against aggression, a principle to which the Government pledged themselves at the last election but about which they now seemed uncertain. The majority in this country wanted a firm union with France and Russia, and the objections of other countries to being linked with Russia had been vastly exaggerated. He urged that we should put ourselves right with the world by offering a mandate system for all colonies. Both Germany and Italy could bear their full part in the work of organising the world, but it must be done internationally, and first we should have to abandon the Imperialist view.

With much of this speech Mr. CHAMBERLAIN admitted freely that he agreed; there were many concessions, he said, which might be made without too much difficulty if only there could be certainty that they would not be used merely for a strategic purpose. In the long run British interests would be best served by an unselfish solution. Mr. LLOYD GEORGE he found over-gloomy and ill-informed. The recent assurances to Poland, Rumania and Greece, which were in the nature of first-aid treatment for Europe, were a

great departure from our traditional policy, but had been widely approved because of what the Germans had done in Bohemia and Moravia. It was quite untrue that the negotiations with

not reciprocal—if anything the inequality had been in favour of Russia, for our commitments to other countries were irrespective of whether she came in. Regretting that M. POTEMKIN was not going to Geneva, Mr. CHAMBERLAIN spoke of a sort of "veil or wall" between the two Governments which was extremely difficult to penetrate; but though he declined for obvious reasons to be drawn further than that, he had hope of an agreement.

Mr. CHURCHILL was all for a triple alliance between England, France and Russia for the sole purpose of resisting aggression. He compared it, out of respect for Mr. CHAMBERLAIN, to an armoured umbrella under which other nations would be invited to shelter. Poland need not be anxious on the score of Russian troops fighting on her territory; what Poland would need would be munitions, not men, and Russia could supply them. If the Government, having neglected our defences, thrown away Czechoslovakia and let us in for fresh commitments without due examination of their technical aspects, now rejected the indispensable aid of Russia, then indeed their name would be mud.

Mr. EDEN was of much the same opinion. We had occupied an outpost line in Eastern Europe, he said, and now we should consolidate a common front behind it; he therefore urged a triple alliance with France and Russia on completely reciprocal terms. Sir HENRY PAGE CROFT naturally distrusted such a venture, but Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR insisted that Turkey would not move until she was certain of Russian co-operation. Mr. BUTLER wound up, which he does most persuasively, and assured the House that Mr. CHURCHILL's anxiety over the method of our commitment to Poland was unfounded; the General Staff had been consulted. So ended a very significant debate.

Monday, May 22nd.—Though they were overshadowed this afternoon by the importance of events in the Commons, the Lords had a good debate on the Military Training Bill and gave it a Second Reading. The PRIMATE urged that the generous provisions for conscientious objectors should be generously administered. Lord FARINGDON attacked conscription bitterly from his own observation of its effects upon French peasants, and various peers welcomed the measure, mostly with warmth.

In the Commons Mr. MALCOLM

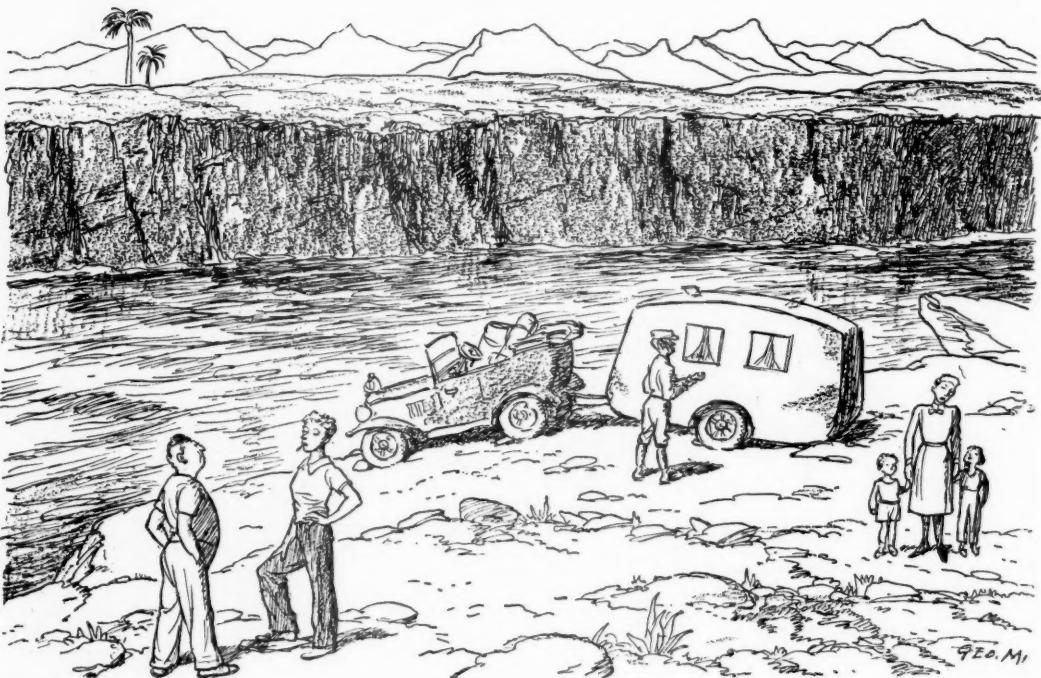


MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL AND MR. ANTHONY EDEN
DEMAND A WHOLE-HEARTED ALLIANCE WITH RUSSIA.

Russia were being affected by mistrust on the part of the Government of Russia's internal methods, and it was equally untrue that the arrangements suggested by the Government were



A WHACK AT THE GORDIAN KNOT
MR. MALCOLM MACDONALD



"What about your family motto 'Nunquam Retrorsum' now?"

MACDONALD, faced with the awkward task of expounding the Government's latest scheme for Palestine, impressed his audience even though he failed to convince a large part of it that we came out comfortably on the side of honour.

The difficulty, he explained, was that here was not a conflict between right and wrong, but between right and right. Both the Jews and the Arabs had taken risks for the Allies, and the good name of Great Britain was involved; at the same time the Government denied entirely that they had broken British promises. The Balfour Declaration had spoken of a Jewish "national home" and not of a Jewish State, while the assurance which Commander HOGARTH had given the Arabs had made it clear that though this country favoured the Jews' return to Palestine, it must not disturb the economic and political freedom of the existing populations. (Mr. MACDONALD declared that the Government could recognise no claim based on the MacMahon correspondence.) There could have been no conflict between these two promises, for they had been

made by the same Government. Under the new plans immigration would be higher for five years than it had been

be increasing co-operation between the two peoples. Adequate safeguards had been provided in the scheme for the Jewish minority, and when the time came both the Holy Places and our strategic interests would be made secure.

The Opposition took the line that once more the Government had given way to gangsters. Mr. DE ROTHSCHILD urged that this British withdrawal was so unjustified that the League's permission should be asked to make Palestine a British colony. With the Opposition was Mr. AMERY, who told the House that he could never hold up his head again, either to Jew or Arab, if he had voted for these proposals. The most eloquent champion of the Arab case was Mr. CROSSLEY, who insisted that immigration had meant misery for a people who had been on the spot for one thousand four hundred years, and who therefore had right on their side.

What one might call the theme-song of Mr. BUTLER's reply was that what Palestine needed most was toleration. It certainly seems that she does.



OUR BACK-BENCH WHO'S WHO
Of minor Members one
Is Mr. EDWARD DUNN.

recently, which would help large numbers of refugees; and there was real hope that once the Arabs' misgivings had been removed there would

Unsatisfactoriness of Aunt Emma

FOR years one has asked oneself at intervals: Does Aunt Emma *really listen to what is said to her?* The answer has varied between absolute conviction that she doesn't and a faint hope that perhaps she wasn't feeling quite at her brightest and best with Uncle Egbert fussing about his gas-mask; but the answer has never been an unqualified affirmative.

Practically nothing could be more significant than this, because in future the answer will be an unqualified negative.

Now let us proceed to simple narrative.

"There's a marvellous article in a magazine called *Bright Stars* this week," said Laura.

"Eclipses are very disappointing affairs, dear, believe me," Aunt Emma replied—if you can call it a reply.

I told Aunt Emma in the kindest and most sympathetic way that I agreed with her, and then pointed out that there were other astral phenomena besides eclipses, and personally I'd always wanted to see a comet, or a thunderbolt, or even the Great Bear looking like a Great Bear, which to me it never does.

"You're thinking of the baby Panda, dear," was Aunt Emma's answer—which, honestly, could only be termed idiotic. (Not that one did.)

"Anyhow," Laura said, "stars nowadays haven't anything to do with the sky. Surely you know that."

"Sir James Jeans," then said Aunt Emma. "Or do I mean Dunne?"

With reader comprehension and a more up-to-date outlook I at once realised that Laura was talking about—loosely speaking—Hollywood. I said as much.

"Naturally. And it tells you here how they can change absolutely anybody into something quite different."

"Dear," said Aunt Emma, "Maske-lyne and Cook did that years ago in the dear old Egyptian Hall days."

"This is done by means of plastic-surgery and hair-dressing and make-up and things like that. There are photographs of absolutely hideous creatures with straight hair and flat noses and broad faces and no glamour whatever."

"They would be Esquimaux, dear."

"No, Aunt Emma, not at all. They're girls from Manchester or Hull, practically every one of them."

"Poor things!" said Aunt Emma, who was, as one knows, born in Ealing

and sent to school somewhere just outside Wimbledon.

"But, Aunt Emma, that's just what they aren't. Some terrific producer called Sam Oglestein or Desmond de Marabout or something sees them and realises how marvellous they'd be if only they were absolutely different, and has them taken to one of their places."

"There are many shocking stories in this world, no doubt," Aunt Emma returned, "but I think we won't

discuss these very grave social problems just as tea is coming in."

Laura explained that she didn't mean what Aunt Emma meant.

"The girls are taken to some film-studio, and all kinds of experts get to work on them. And they build up absolutely new faces for them."

Instinctively I turned to the looking-glass.

"Of course they can make the shapes of their faces whatever they like by the way they do their hair



"Well, I'm different. 'Otter it is, 'arder I eat."



"Here's your tea, Sir, and Mistress says she hopes it's how you always like it, 'cos it's how she always makes it."

and put on their make-up." And lipstick alters their mouths completely. And they can do anything they like with eyebrows. And they can even build up quite a new nose."

"Where," I asked, "is this place? Can anybody go there?"

"Are you thinking of having quite a new nose?" Laura asked. "Well, I must say I think you're right. I dare say I'll come too."

She joined me at the looking-glass.

The thought of having one's face altered, a different mouth, a new nose, other eyes, unrecognisable eyebrows and a completely strange complexion was extraordinarily alluring.

"Definitely," said Laura, glaring rather than looking at her reflection. "I should like a complete change."

"So should I," I said—and seldom had one spoken a truer word. "Quite honestly, the more change the better."

It was then that Aunt Emma surpassed herself.

"Don't be silly, dears," she said in a kind and yet utterly absent-minded way. "Change? You've both of you changed enormously already in the last twenty years." E. M. D.

The Revengeful Merchant and His Friend the Solicitor

A REVENGEFUL Merchant was approached one day by his Friend the Solicitor who asked his assistance in the matter of the purchase wholesale of some furnishings for his new abode. The acquisition of this palatial residence, standing in several acres of rich pastureland and abundant orchards, was due in no small part to the remunerative patronage of the Revengeful Merchant over a period of many years, and it would have been true to say, in some degree at least, that its bricks were made of deeds, its tiles of wrists, and its marble baths of affidavits skilfully mined from the rich and inexhaustible litigious proclivities of the Revengeful Merchant. The Revengeful Merchant gave his Friend the Solicitor the necessary wholesale entrée, saved him thereby a good deal of money, and in due course rendered an account for services and advice to date in the following terms:—

"To receiving your request to visit a wholesale furnishing establishment

and duly noting same. Considering same and sending clerk to inquire concerning an appointment. Writing to wholesale firm with regard to appointment and satisfying them as to your financial stability. Advising you in due course as to the appointment. Accompanying you to the premises of the above and attending you during purchase. Advising you concerning same. Lunching with you and afterwards assisting you home. Being subsequently troubled with an article of domestic china delivered to me in error and forwarding same. Hearing my clerk's opinion that legal gentlemen ought not to find it necessary to purchase wholesale and agreeing same. £95 17s. 1d. But say £94 11s. 5d."

Moral: REVENGE IS SWEET.

• • •

"Signor Mussolini said: 'Now I shall shut myself up in silence. In the event of necessity the people will speak. This morning, on the edge of a Cogne mine, I read this: "Forty-five million Italians, 10,000,000 soldiers, and one will."'"—*Daily Telegraph*.

Won't the others?

At the Play

"GROUSE IN JUNE" (CRITERION)

ANYONE who has ever stayed at a fishing inn will have learned to dread the terrible moment when the Army brings in an empty basket on an evening which has swelled the bags of Medicine and the Arts to vulgar proportions. Or vice versa. I know of nothing so embarrassing, nothing which makes one feel so keenly how dangerously thin after all are the pitiful little pretences of civilisation. Nearly as awkward is the experience, from which I myself have not much suffered, of having hooked the sole victim of a week when the fish have consistently put safety first. For the angler whom some unforgivable accident has favoured in this way there are two recognised methods of rejoining his fellows: one is to simulate the utmost shame and repentance, the other is to be frankly defiant. Neither is very successful.

The author of this charming comedy, Mr. N. C. HUNTER, seems to know all about these social curiosities. I tried hard to detect from his dialogue whether he has participated actively in the garrulous mysteries of fishing inns, or whether he is one of those gutless (I speak only of his hat, of course) beings whose tortured faces occasionally mar the fellowship, the almost cathedral atmosphere, of fishing-bars. I suspect him of being the latter, because of a comparative absence of technicalities which I doubt if any angler-playwright could achieve unless he were a man of iron.

What appeals to me most about this play is that nobody dominates it. It is acted entirely by minor characters, sharply drawn and each promoted in turn to the centre of the stage; their personalities grow on us separately and steadily, for Mr. HUNTER has the gift, invaluable in this kind of comedy, of making people likeable while he is laughing at them. Many of his scenes are stretched to the point of

farce, but their humour preserves a quality of simpleness which is very attractive.

"Auchterlochy" is in a forgotten corner of the north-west Highlands,



TROUT ON THE BRAIN

Nancy Ferguson *MISS CONSTANCE LORNE*
Joe Baker *MR. BILLY QUEST*
Professor Matthew Cunningham . . *MR. RICHARD GOOLDEN*

and its rickety hotel is owned by the *Campbells*, a shrewd and wary couple. Every summer the same nucleus



THE BIG SHOT MEETS HIS MATCH.

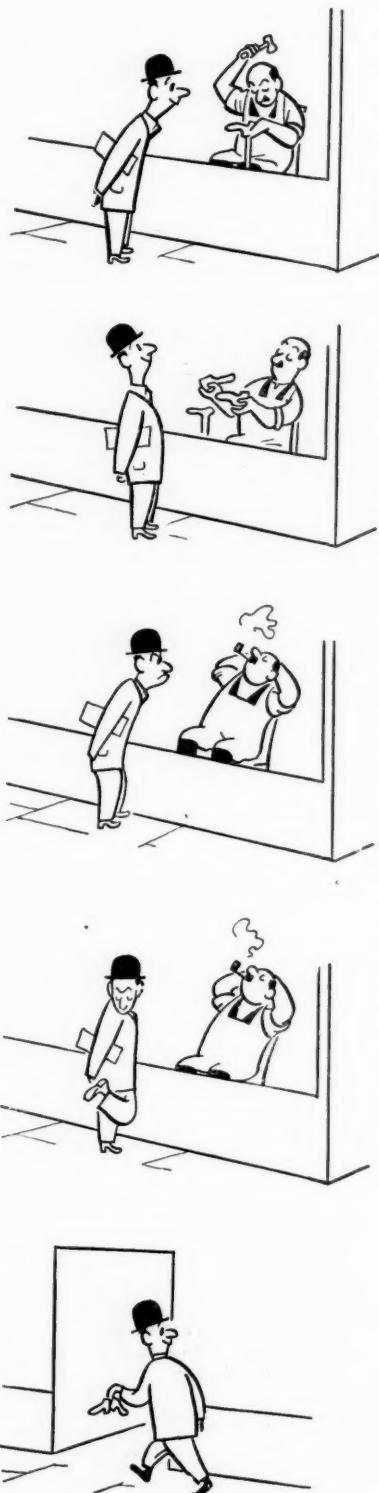
Slick McCoy *MR. ROBERT BEATTY*
John Campbell *MR. ARTHUR HAMBLING*

assembles. There is *General Sandeman*, a decent unperceptive warrior, who has had the sense to turn down a malarial Governorship for trout; his wife, a whale-boned lady, heavily laden with the white woman's burden of superiority; *Ferguson*, a pompous fellow, and *Nancy*, his sister, to whom he behaves as if he were a Victorian father in melodrama; and there is the *Professor*, a meek delightful little bird-watcher, who seems to have been born only to be pushed about by others bigger and not so humble as himself.

The chances of his ever gathering the courage or the coherent thought necessary to declare his growing passion for *Nancy* are negligible, when the hotel is thrown upside-down by the arrival of a surprising party from America, searching for galleon gold in the bay. *Sophie Kelly* and her husband are on the level, but they have joined up unwisely with a crook. With what a crook! *Sophie's* effect on the inmates is sufficiently electric, but that of *Joe* is overwhelming.

When the Americans look like leaving in disappointment, the gold from *John Campbell's* dental-plate and from his piping medals strewn judiciously about the beach leads to a frenzy of digging in which even *Mrs. Sandeman* forgets the prior claims of prestige. And all through this absurdity runs the delicious drooling of the *Professor*, up to the great moment when at last his passion is out. In the funniest scene of all he and *Nancy* tie up the double-crossing *Joe* with pink-ribbon after *Nancy* has knocked him for six with her brother's prize trout. (I must confess I thought very little of this vaunted specimen. If it was anywhere near the five pounds claimed for it I am prepared to eat my landing-net without salt.)

As a light evening this is strongly to be recommended. Mr. RICHARD GOOLDEN is top of the class for his brilliant portrait of the *Professor*, and I put Miss BILLIE RYAN next for the engaging way she plays *Sophie*. But the others run them close. ERIC.



The Expert

THE scoutmaster of the 243rd East London Troop came to me the other day with rather a peculiar request.

"Mr. Sympson," he said, "do you ever visit pin-table saloons? The fact is that there is one just opposite our headquarters, and I very much fear that sooner or later some of our more irresponsible lads will be lured inside. I thought that if you came down and gave the boys a little talk on the subject it might be useful."

"A talk about the evils of gambling?" I said.

The scoutmaster smiled slightly.

"I fear," he said, "that the gambling instinct is so deeply-rooted in the East Enders' blood that even my scouts are prejudiced on the subject. When a boy's father spends four shillings a week on football pools and his mother makes a steady income in the flat-racing season it seems rather impertinent to harp overmuch on that aspect of the thing. But everybody knows that it is impossible to make a profit on pin-tables, and if you were to give a talk and say that you had carefully tested the machines in the saloon and that the ratio of wins to expenditure was ridiculously small you would appeal to the common sense of the boys."

"Unfortunately," I said, "I have never been inside a pin-table saloon. I shouldn't know how to work the things."

"It is quite simple," said the scoutmaster, "you just put a penny in the slot and wait for the lights to come on, and then you pull the trigger and the ball glides slowly round and passes through the lights. Or not, as the case may be."

"You seem to know all about it," I said.

"A friend told me," said the scoutmaster, and I left it at that.

"Very well," I said, "I will pop into the saloon to-morrow evening on my

way to your troop, and take with me three shillings' worth of coppers. Then I will report results to the troop, though it will be a bit awkward if I show a profit on the adventure."

"You needn't worry about that," said the scoutmaster with a rather sad laugh.

Next evening I entered the saloon, and began my assault by attacking a machine called "Hocus Pocus." A small card announced that 8500 was the necessary score but that the machine was for amusement only and no prizes were given. To this had been added in pencil the cryptic words, "Sez You."

After nine goes I scored 8700, and one of the attendants dashed up and handed me a threepenny packet of cigarettes. I moved on to a machine called "Rushing Rivers," and this time I had to spend only fourpence to secure a threepenny packet of cigarettes. The "Ladies' Delight" gained me a packet for elevenpence, and I was thinking of having another go on "Rushing Rivers" when my eye was caught by a large machine decorated with ladies in scanty bathing-costumes called "Margate Belles." It looked a good machine but proved to be the worst of the lot. A few minutes later I changed a half-crown for some more coppers, and by the time I abandoned the attempt as a dead loss I had put in no fewer than forty-seven pence.

I went along to the headquarters of the 243rd with great enthusiasm for the task that lay to my hand, and I spoke with unusual eloquence for twenty minutes. I told of the loss of a penny on "Rushing Rivers," the loss of eightpence on the "Ladies' Delight." But I reserved my peroration for the awful character of "Margate Belles," which had cost me three-and-elevenpence without yielding a single prize. No Old Testament prophet dealing with the sins of the people ever spoke with such fire.

As I left the room a small boy touched me on the arm.

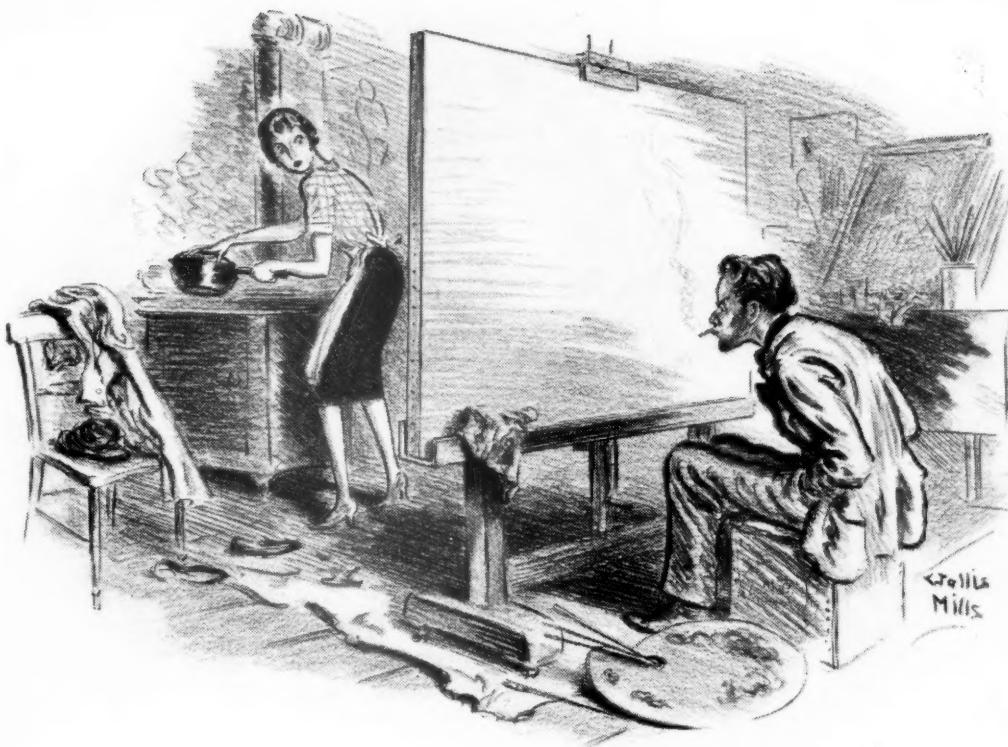
"If you put your knee against the left leg of 'Margate Belles' and tilt



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"Oh, damn Posterity!"

it slightly," he said, "you will be surprised."

I had no intention of going into the saloon again, but it happened to start to drizzle and I just popped in to shelter. It is a pity I am a non-smoker, because I really don't know what to do with the seventeen packets of cigarettes that are bulging out of my pockets at this moment.

• •

"Surely"

ACCUSTOMED as I am to muse
On solemn things, and drink the
views
Of men of light and leading,
I find the letters they address
On graver matters to the Press
Make noble reading.

Such study from my early youth
Has brought to light the salient
truth

That one might lay securely
A shade of odds—say ten to one—
That they'll get in before they've
done

Th' expression, "Surely."

Why this should be I've vainly sought;
It's not a word that teems with
thought

Or any latent vigour;
It does not catch the reader's eye
And in one swift flash clarify,
Or I'm a nigger.

Indeed, it might be held to speak
Of one who fears his facts are weak,
His mental process foggy,
Who, though he hopes he's not obscure,
Is not by any means too sure,
But rather groggy.

That, be it said, I don't advance;
One can but put it down to chance

In some queer way; no doubt it
Crops idly up and in it goes
For no known cause and, I suppose,
That's all about it.

And there is one of whom I've heard
Who, having sworn that that same
word
Should not, for once, embellish
His then outpouring, found it had
Not only once but twice, by gad,
To his disrelish.

"Surely." It does no active harm;
It may exude some secret charm;
Yet one would think that purely
By way of change it might be
swopped;
These brainy souls might well adopt
Some new word, surely.

DUM-DUM.

The Fast Ship

CAPTAIN ROMANESCU acknowledged warmly the introduction to Bill.

"You are British Nevvy, yes?" he shouted. "It is very nice, I think. Sometimes before I am also in this British Nevvy. Sure. It is very interesting.

"It is in the war-time. I am master of very nice Balkanian ship, *Carola Mianu*, calling to Dakar for bunkers, cargo for U.K. In all this hotels there everyone spikk about this German submerrins is very bedd jost now. Bot it is all right, there is British Nevvy convoy sailing in two-three days,

maybe if I spikk to commodore I can go also.

"This commodore is Captain Colander, British Nevvy, captain of escort cruiser. He is very nice to me.

"This is eight-knot convoy," he say. "How is spidd of your ship? You can mekk eight knot?"

"*Carola Mianu* is very fast ship," I say. "Sure, I can mekk eight knot. More also if you say."

"Well," he say, "you most understand also this zogzeg sailing in convoy."

"He explenn to me how it is all the ships most sail maybe ten minutes on one course, then all at once put helm

over on to other course for maybe twelve minutes then all at once helm back again and so on. For this there is special clocks in all this ships for ringing bells at proper time to put helm over. I explenn to Captain Colander this is very easy for me, I hev moch practise. If you are coming to Borella maybe two-three days before feast-time and you most miss somm tide for not getting in too soon so the ship is finish working and sailing also before the feast, this zogzeg course is very good, because hove-to sound very bedd for the owners.

"Captain Colander say 'Very good, Mr. Romanescu, bot you most understand if you sail with my convoy you most tekk all my orders from me very strict. I am in command.'

"I say, 'Captain Colander, this is all right. Romanescu is now British Nevvy. Sure.' I stend op and salutt like this.

"This is very worrying for me. When I comm beck to the ship I spikk to Chief Engineer.

"You remember, Padranos, when we hev all this Mecca pilgrim on board with cholera we hev mekk 6.85 knot. How moch more can you mekk?"

"Padranos say, 'That is the most. Maybe if we hev new peckings and very good coal, 7.2 knot, I think not. It is the most.'

"It is all right," I say, "maybe Captain Colander spikk of this eight knot for the precaution, I think so."

"Before we start Captain Colander say to me, 'You hev fast ship, Mr. Romanescu. You are leading "C" column. You most be very careful for all this navigation.'

"Soon outside Dakar all this ship is in station, British Nevvy signalman on board comm to me with signal from escort ship, 'Spidd of convoy is six knot.' This is very nice for me. I tell signalman mekk signal back it is O.K., *Carola Mianu* is very fast ship, no fear.

"Maybe half-hour this escort ship mekk new signal, 'Spidd of convoy is six-half knot.' I signal back it is all right, *Carola Mianu* is British Nevvy now. I spikk to Chief Engineer he most bring somm more engineer on watch it is very important for keeping this spidd.

"Soon there is new signal, 'Spidd of convoy is seven knot.' I spikk to Chief Engineer he most hev all this engineers on watch, it is very important. He say it is the most, all the boilers is bursting now sometimes. There is no more engineers. Signalman say Captain Colander mekking signal 'C.1, why are you out of station?' I tell signalman mekk explennation for Captain



"You must never demonstrate a fan, Higgins, when Miss James is selling confetti."

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"Another l.b.w.! What's wrong with you all?"
"It's a umpire's wicket to-day."

Colander there is somm trobble with this peckings, soon there is somm more engineers, it is all right, bot maybe if convoy is not so fast it is easier for me. Escort ship mekk new signal, 'C.1 to C.4, C.2 to C.1, C.3 to C.2, C.4 to C.3. C.4 mekk best speed rejoin convoy if possible Las Palmas.'

"This is very bedd for me, alone with all this German submerrins, very dangerous. I mekk signal for Captain Colander maybe if I cot out all this zogzeg steering straight course I can keep op with zogzeg convoy. He say no, thank you, keep this zogzeg, it is very nice, spidd of convoy is seven-half knot."

"After this I spikk with Chief Engineer, we hove-to for two-three hours fixing somm new peckings. Then we shot off all this zogzeg clock. It is too slow I think. We mekk very good spidd for Las Palmas on straight course."

"When we are near Las Palmas I

see convoy ahead mekking in-shore maybe five-six knot. I put on very full spidd and soon I can tekk station. I switch on this zogzeg clock and mekk signal to Captain Colander, it is all right, here is *Carola Mianu* still British Nevvy, obeying orders, how is that O.K. Jost then this zogzeg clock ring the bell and we put helm hard over. She comm round very fine, it is like British destroyer. Suddenly I see all other ships is not mekking this damn zogzeg any more, we are mekking collision with this last ship in 'B' column. I am so cross for myself for Captain Colander seeing this soch, bot it is too late. We mekk the collision. Bot it is all right after, I hev explenn to him."

"No, she does not sink. Not properly. When we strock, of course, all my crew jomp overboard, bot when I look I see she sink so slow, so I mekk them comm back and we can beach her all right in very nice place, lovely

sandy bottom, very pretty on shore also. So it is all right in six-seven months she is quite repair. It is very interesting for me." A. M. C.

How Are Your Associations?

"*Dimorphotheca aurantiaca*, as its name suggests, is a rich orange flower of the marigold type, not more than eight or nine inches high."—Gardening.

"This provides a delicious way of using stale bread which has been baked until crisp and then minced or grated finely:—

3 heaped tablespoons of baked bread-crumbs.

10 eggs.

7 heaped tablespoons of castor sugar.

7 heaped tablespoons of groundalmonds.

1 teacupful of rum."

Beginning of a Newspaper Recipe.

If you can't afford stale bread, try sawdust.

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

A Portland Pageant

FEUDALISM, when it has left the last traces of the age of chivalry well behind it, is not attractive; and in carrying the second volume of *A History of Welbeck Abbey and its Owners* (FABER AND FABER, 25/-) from 1755 to 1879, Professor A. S. TURBERVILLE has had to cope with the yellow-plush atmosphere that lingers, now faintly, now flamboyantly, round the BENTINCK family records. Welbeck only enters with the heiress who married the second Duke of Portland; and this couple, their children and their children's famous governess Mrs. ELSTOB, provide the book's best pictures of domestic life. The third Duke was everything (politically) by starts and nothing long—rather, one gathers, from indecision and incapacity than from any detachment from office. The happiest rôle is played by the fourth Duke, whose disinterested experiments on behalf of naval

architecture should entitle him to a place (now missing) in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. With the almost fabulous fifth Duke, the mysterious landlord of "The Paddington Ghost," the chronicle closes. Its notes are ample and interesting, its illustrations characteristic or charming or both; and it will prove a mine—though not so rich a mine as you would imagine—to the social and constitutional historian.

Red on the Map

SIR JOHN MARRIOTT has been writing books for fifty years. Nearly all of them have been concerned with the politics or economics of England or Europe. But all that time he has been studying, pondering and producing articles on the history and problems of that vast and heterogeneous collection of lands and peoples which are united under the King's sovereignty. In *The Evolution of the British Empire and Commonwealth* (NICHOLSON AND WATSON, 12/6), rather a cumbersome title as he admits, he presents us with his ripe conclusions. He covers the whole wide field, going back to the origins of colonisation and tracing, of necessity briefly but with a sure eye for the significant detail and for the really as opposed to the officially important individual, the development of every member of a unique corporation. His history is admirably proportioned and unassailably accurate. His politics, as is well known, are soundly conservative. He has no doubts, for instance, as to the justice of the British cause in the South African War. He mistrusts hasty democratisation and abominates separatism: "the Irish Free State is, happily, *sui generis*." It is not for paradox or novel theory that one looks in Sir JOHN's books, but for well found history and the temperate expression of orthodox opinion. These are the pre-eminent qualities of this one, which, as an introduction to a great subject, could hardly be bettered.

Shades of the Prison-House

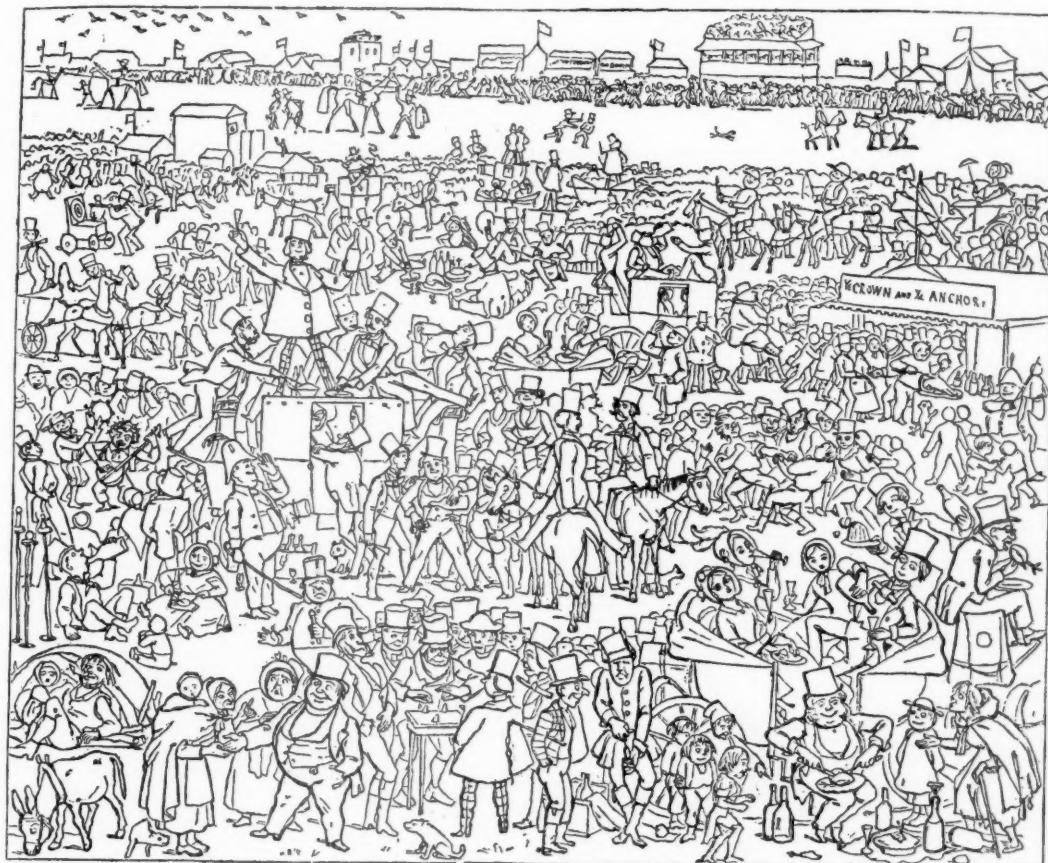
If anyone still doubts that the eighteenth century was an unpleasant patch of history, the plight of its children should be sufficient to reassure him. Yet because pioneers like BLAKE provide happier glimpses, one is apt to forget the actual situation they faced. The common run of parents seem to have been doting, negligent, or cruel; public-schools both casual and barbarous, and private ones—as so many of them still are—a mere convenience for lazy parents and needy educationists. Heaven help *The English Child in the Eighteenth Century* (MURRAY, 15/-)! True, there were mitigating factors, but they hardly outweigh the insects in young SOUTHEY's hair or the fury that confronted the boy GODWIN when he caressed the cat on Sunday. No organised games; practically no examinations; some schools—like the St. QUENTINS' at Reading—which allowed



"Quite easy—caught it with a fly Cook gave me."



MANNERS AND CVSTOMS OF YE ENGLYSHE: IN. 1849. No. 12.



Richard Doyle, June 2nd, 1849

you privacy and leisure; and, unless your parents were very godly indeed, a cultivated interest in the drama. One of the many pretty things that Miss ROSAMOND BAYNE-POWELL has inserted among the grim ones is a puppet-show at Bath in which Mr. Punch acknowledged the plaudits of the company by bowing "till his buttons touched the ground."

A Peer Behind the Scenes

The Earl of MIDDLETON declares he had nothing whatever to do with the introduction of the "Brodrick" army cap

that bears his name, but merely chanced to be War Minister when first it came into use. Compared with such a disclosure it is mere anticlimax to reveal that Lord CURZON's vice-royalty was terminated not, as one had always supposed, on account of a clash with Lord KITCHENER, but rather as the result of a long series of altercations with the Home Government, of which the KITCHENER episode formed only a part. In *Records and Reactions, 1856-1939* (MURRAY, 12/6), the author redeems a pledge to his old chief, Mr. BALFOUR, by setting this matter of the occasion of CURZON's recall beyond dispute, while incidentally establishing against

Mr. BALFOUR himself that the destiny of the viceroyalty on another occasion was almost changed by his incredible omission of the word "not" in a vital manuscript memorandum. This volume ranges over an immense field of political history as a Southern Ireland landlord, who has always had some Irish question troubling his peace of mind, concerns himself with army reform, Parliamentary procedure, German ambitions in South America, or the unrest of the age. Seen from his angle it would appear that Viscount HALDANE declines in stature, Viscount ESHER is a mere masked obstruction, Mr. GLADSTONE a remembered giant, Lord SALISBURY the paladin of his generation.

"Unseren Kolonien"

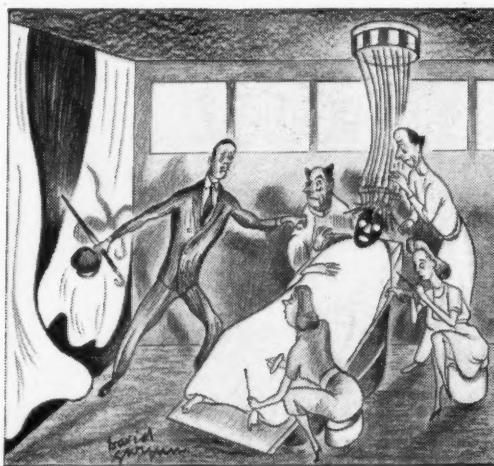
The apparent object of the Berlin-Rome axis being to keep the rest of Europe in a state of continual nervous apprehension, it is clear that we may expect at any moment a renewal of violent German propaganda on the subject of the return of their former colonies. The case against any claim of this kind is here presented by the Rt. Hon. L. S. AMERY, M.P., clearly, concisely and emphatically, as might be expected from so robust an Imperialist. *The German Colonial Claim* (CHAMBERS, 7/6) is the title of his book, which we cordially commend to the attention of all readers, and especially those who still imagine that there may be something to be said for the eventual return of the mandated territories. In Mr. AMERY's opinion, at all events, the question is not even open to discussion. In so far as BISMARCK was interested in colonial expansion it was entirely because of its "nuisance value," and the same holds good with the Nazi Government of to-day. It is unnecessary to point out the danger of permitting Germany in her present mood to acquire submarine and aeroplane bases in the neighbourhood of our African and Pacific colonies. No doubt Germany imagines that a redistribution of colonies would minister to her economic needs as well as to her desire for prestige and power; but, to use our author's words—"To make out a claim for a vast empire is one thing: to know how to administer it is another"—and it is clear from the history of German rule in Togoland and the Cameroons that the savage technique employed against African natives—"semi-apes" in Herr HITLER's own words—displayed all the inherent vice of German colonial administration.

Emergence Through Crisis

Mr. ANTHONY EDEN, in publishing collected addresses—*Foreign Affairs* (FABER AND FABER, 12/6)—beginning with

his maiden speech in the House of Commons, is not ashamed to expose the stages either of his passage from Back-Bench adolescence to the dignity of Cabinet rank, or of his slowly awakening sense of that progressive decline in international good faith against which he felt finally compelled to protest by resigning office. While he could still look to Italy to share in safeguarding a pact of peace he could mingle mirth with matter, referring to Iraq, for instance, as a country with "its forelegs in one civilisation and its hindlegs in another," or comparing elaborate machinery for appeasement to a mouse-trap set to catch a goblin; but more recently, since the stress of office and the reality of Europe's degeneracy have come home to him, he has developed a sterner and far profounder statesmanship. If there is nothing in these speeches which we have not had before, they remain noteworthy for a certain masculinity of outlook and freedom from easy triumphing when Mr.

EDEN was proved by the event to be right, yet as here collected they will be studied rather for the light they throw on a probable personal future than as historic documents.



"Miriam, my darling, speak to me! What have they done to you?"

successfully with ruffians who vary both in craftsmanship and codes of honour. Let it also be put on record that Mr. HUME's *Lord Contam* should be studied by anyone who disbelieves the saying that there is no fool like an old one.

Publicans, a Saint and Some Sinners

Mr. JOHN NEWTON CHANCE, who will be remembered as the creator of an outsize in men—*Mr. deHavilland*—can always be relied upon to do things on a large and lavish scale; so readers of *The Devil in Greenlands* (GOLLANZ, 7/6) will not be astonished to find that they have been provided with a murder and also with a village girl who gave birth to sextuplets. Here undoubtedly lies an opportunity for embarrassing frankness, but happily Mr. CHANCE is more intent upon giving a picture of a village that had willy-nilly jumped into glaring notoriety than to insist harpingly upon this miraculous increase of a dwindling population.

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